

The New WWF

Moving from weenies to winners

We all know that we can't fight something with nothing – and that saying no to Bush, to the Iraq War, and to conservative cronyism does not a message make.

Yet when Democrats and progressives sit down to decide What We're For (WWF), we often put the other WWF – the World Wrestling Federation – to shame.

So here's a first cut at an á la carte menu of no-brainer, change-oriented principles I'm pretty sure that most progressives, New Democrats, moderate Republicans and independent-minded folks in America crave.

I hasten to add that this draft menu is emphatically NOT an attempt to build or call for a national Democratic message platform or contract that all our candidates should run on.

As posted repeatedly, I think that nationalizing the election is *not* the way to go if we want Congress and subpoena power back, and that any message beyond "we need to restore checks and balances" is pushing it with voters who are sick of both political parties.

In other words, forget one fixed recipe; we just need a solid menu of good ideas, themes and proposals for local Democrats to pick from and run on, in their own voice.

So here's an initial taste test – feel free to add your own flames and recipes. And I'll keep posting here as plans for the Regime Change Café Menu bake on up to a final form.

- **Our hearts on our sleeve.** We want candidates like Paul Wellstone who run – and win – with the courage of their convictions, beliefs and if they so choose, their faith. To such core progressive values as an open heart, tolerance, privacy, opportunity and responsibility – let us also embrace a sense of humor and humility about how right we are, all the time. And then we can repair the world.

- **A smart war on terror.** "No war on Iraq" does not a winning message make – not when fear-mongers like Karl Rove are out in force. So we need to make the case for being safe – that we can find Osama *without* losing our values along the way at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo. That takes global ethics and engagement, building economic hope, and acting tough as nails when necessary.

- **Starting gate equality.** The American dream – a melting pot of opportunity for all – has been left sitting on the back burner for too long. We need to care for our children and pay our teachers as though our future depends on it. We need a living wage, health care for all and high road economic security policies that effectively answer the challenge of "If not Wal-Mart, then what?" That will take thinking at bold scales, and delivery via reformed institutions that work across traditional boundaries. And it will take serious money and investment we must find at all cost.

- **Doing the math on government spending.** Whining that Republicans are hypocrites on budget deficits doesn't change the fact that there will be red ink and investment shortfalls for as far as the eye can see. To jumpstart payback policies and move from incarceration to investment, progressives should strongly favor economic and social "impact assessments" on all forms of spending and tax giveaways, so we are calling for the most bang for the buck on government spending – not conservatives. Guess what? Smart investments in preventative health, infrastructure, childhood education and clean energy that pay for themselves over time will look good compared to prison construction and silly corporate tax breaks.

- **A new vision of the Commons.** The Me Decade and The Ownership Society have been excellent cover stories for the raping and pillaging of billions of dollars worth of our land, air and water. But guess what – it's our stuff, dammit! – and it's time we made the case for protecting, enhancing and naming our common assets and public spaces. This isn't just about parks and lakes but also about new forms of critical shared resources – such as community Internet systems open to all Americans.

- **Not left, or right, but forward.** We live in the era of post-political party, change-based politics – where half of America doesn't vote and people are tired of bickering on both sides of the political aisle. But the progressive majority – and our issues – can't be realized or marketed effectively if our agenda is "owned" by either political party. We therefore heartily embrace a new dynamic for strange bedfellows politics, where the parties and politicians are reaching higher for big bold ideas like energy independence, not selling out for least common denominator policies that offer little vision. Doing this is just the push that Democratic candidates need to move from weenies to winners.

Dan Carol is a Eugene political consultant. A collection of his commentaries can be found at www.kumbayadammit.com

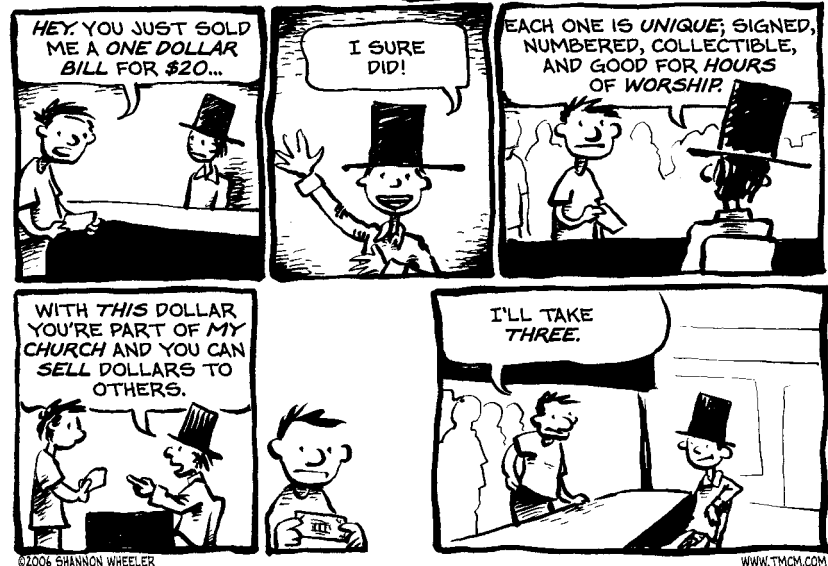
Editor's note: Actually, the "new" WWF is the World Wildlife Fund, which sued the World Wrestling Federation for the rights to the acronym. Now, the greased-up grapplers are known as World Wrestling Entertainment. "I'm not willing to accept 'WWE' just because the wildlife kids beat out the wrestling kids," Dan said. "I'm in denial."



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DELUGES OF GRANDEUR

As a resident of the Lake Creek area, I want to thank you for your informative article (3/16) about the so-called "Pitchfork Rebellion" in our curious valley.

While your reporter Kera Abraham uncovered several hot items for the story, there are some interesting things that were missed.

First, this valley is diversely populated, although in somewhat distinct neighborhoods. Of course you have the Swiss loggers to the west (around Swisshome, naturally). Then there's the gay cowpersons around Deadwood. Moving farther east, in the Greenleaf area there are the rebellious pitchfork-wielding Hobbit people that your reporter captured on film and in quotes. Even further east, around Triangle Lake (Lago Triangelo, perhaps?) are the Italian farmers. And, interspersed among us, let's not forget the Ancient Ones and their descendents, who have been logging (gasp!), ranching, and farming this land, some for around 150 years.

Second, this valley, and the Coast Range, averages more than 100 inches of rainfall per year, twice that of the Willamette Valley, mostly natural orographic rainfall, but also somewhat due to the Swiss loggers in their helicopters seeding the clouds. Yep, they are conducting ethnic warfare up there, trying to wash the rest of us out. It can really flat out pour down around here, sometimes for many hours at a stretch.

These frequent deluges wash the hillsides, both clearcut and forested, down upon us. The deluges also wash the herbicides, insecticides, fertilizers, biological warfare agents, and everything else down the river and into the sea (or into the water table, of course).

Third, in this valley, at least, the deer, elk, black bear, coyote, cougars and the two-headed bobcats have us "smart" monkeys outnumbered. Who knows what they think about the helicopters and the spray? They aren't talking to us about it, at least.

Yep, it's quite a place to live, what with the Italian Farmers singing their folk songs in their native tongue whenever they gather up at

the Grange hall, and as they work the fields. Up in the hills, you can occasionally hear the echoes of the lederhosen-clad loggers yodeling, although the helicopters tend to drown them out. And those helicopters are often overhead, as they do their spraying and strafing runs, also occasionally bombing us with holy cheese and cuckoo clocks. Of course, the Hobbit people are always loudly carrying on about something, and them color-coordinated Deadwood folks know how to party (and redecorate!) as well. The Ancient Ones seem to quietly keep to themselves, probably wondering who is going to move into the valley next.

Well, I hear the helicopters again, I better take cover. I hope to meet your reporter at one of our many roadside fightclub bars — I have more stories to tell.

P.S. My wife and I want to let you know that we are still happily married, 15 years after I answered her ad in your quaint little rag. Amazing to me, she is still putting up with my sense of humor, as well as this strange valley we call home.

Mark Gross
Blachly

FUNDING THE GARAGE

You too may find yourself on the side of the opposition if you knew how council intends to fund the car house. The council is diverting: \$250,000 from storm water funds, \$400,000 from riparian funds, \$475,000 from library funds, \$5,035,000 urban renewal funds, \$1,035,000 facility replacement funds, for a \$7,195,000 total, and that's not where it stops.

There is to be a 2006 bond measure for the library, so why will they sacrifice these funds? Council just raised the storm drain fee a meager 30 cents for stream corridor acquisition and now they are already looking at diverting these funds to the garage. Council is planning to put a 2008 bond measure on the ballot to pay for a new City Hall. Shouldn't they be directing the more than \$6 million of urban renewal and facility replacement funds towards the City Hall project? The taxpaying citizens